



Senator

# Jeanne Kohl-Welles

36th Legislative District

## Legislative Report

### *Stay in touch!*

Please keep me informed of your ideas, concerns and community activities.

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#### **Senate Committees**

- Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, Chair
- Health & Long-Term Care
- Ways & Means
- Rules

#### **Other involvements**

- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
- Joint Legislative Systems Committee
- Joint Task Force on Criminal Background Check Processes, Co-Chair
- Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee
- Washington State Institute on Public Policy
- Washington Arts Commission

February 2007

Dear Constituents,

The 2007 legislative session is now in full swing. The past two sessions have been among the most productive in state history, and I expect this year's to be another great one.

We have an opportunity to make considerable progress for Washington's families and our future. We Democrats extended our majorities in the Senate and the House of Representatives this past November, which means we still set the agenda and control the flow of legislation.

As is the case in odd-numbered years, we are writing biennial operating, capital (construction) and transportation budgets for the state. Thanks to a strong economy and smart budgeting choices during the past two years, we legislators face a rare budget reserve rather than the daunting deficits that were so painfully common following September 11.

I remain a member of the Senate Ways & Means Committee, which makes the tough budget decisions. Increasing funding for our schools and access to an affordable and high-quality higher education system are top priorities of mine.

I continue to chair the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Committee, which oversees legislation that supports the health and welfare of Washington workers while strengthening our business community.

My new committee assignment is the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee, which is responsible for addressing the issue of how to provide coverage for the 600,000 Washington citizens currently without health care—of whom 16 percent are children.

I've included a survey to obtain your input in helping to craft our state budget. I also encourage you to visit me in Olympia any time and especially on Presidents Day for the 36th District Day (details inside).

I'm always pleased to hear from you. Let me know your thoughts—by e-mail, phone call or letter—and I'll be sure to keep in touch.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Kohl-Welles

# What to expect in 2007

During the past two legislative sessions, Democrats solved problems. A summary of our priorities from this period reads today like a **catalog of achievement**. We:

- Committed to providing health coverage for all children by 2010;
- Developed minimum renewable fuel content standards;
- Established mental health parity in insurance coverage to treat diseases of the mind the same as diseases of the body;
- Created “green” building standards and statewide recycling programs for unwanted electronic items that wreak havoc on our environment;
- Increased penalties on sex offenders;
- Created additional resources for counties to deal with the growing problem of methamphetamines;
- Prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing and insurance;
- Resolved the long-standing dispute between doctors and trial lawyers on medical malpractice;
- Raised unemployment insurance benefits for workers between jobs while reducing taxes on employers;
- Increased options for students to succeed for those who are falling short in achieving our tough academic standards in the WASL exams; and
- Established a process for conducting reviews of tax breaks for businesses.

All the while, we maintained fiscally responsible budgets. We didn’t raise taxes when the state was in deficit, and we put money into savings when the state was in

surplus. We enacted numerous important policy initiatives to help working families while protecting our economy when it is weak and sustaining it when it is strong.



Sen. Kohl-Welles and her mother Elizabeth Kohl with Gov. Gregoire.

In the upcoming session, with an even stronger majority, Democrats intend to make even more progress, particularly on funding for public education; making health care accessible and affordable for all of our citizens; and protecting the Puget Sound. I also am interested in working with my colleagues to secure funding for recommendations from Washington Learns.

However, you will not see the kind of off-balanced

governing we saw in Congress when one party had a similar power dynamic at the federal level. Democrats aim to keep alive the spirit and actuality of inclusion, collaboration and compromise that made the past two sessions so beneficial for all Washingtonians. Compromise, of course, does not mean selling our core values down the river. It means negotiation—giving something to get something—so that everyone benefits from the final product. We intend to keep going in this same manner this session—governing responsibly and in a bipartisan manner.

We have nearly \$2 billion in unexpected, unbudgeted revenue. But we also know that the hot economy behind that reserve is cooling.

Just as we were the past two sessions, we will be pragmatically progressive: pragmatic, because we know that economic growth is slowing, and progressive, because we know that the demands on Washington families are not. The Legislature must be ready to answer both challenges.

## 36th Legislative District Day – Monday, Feb. 19 (Presidents Day)



Please join me and state Reps. Mary Lou Dickerson and Helen Sommers on Monday, Feb. 19, for the 36th Legislative District Day in Olympia. We have set aside time to meet with you.

### Here’s the tentative schedule:

- **10:30 a.m.** – Meet in the John A. Cherberg Building, Conference Rooms ABC (1st floor) to kick off the day and receive a legislative schedule.
- **12–1 p.m.** – Brown bag lunch in John A. Cherberg Building, Conference Rooms ABC. This is your time to ask us questions about legislative issues of interest to you.
- **The rest of the day is yours.** Depending on the Legislature’s schedule, you might want to sit in on a committee hearing. Copies will be provided of our schedules.

For more details, please call my legislative assistant Ken Camp at (360) 786-7670.

# 36th District Session Survey

**Record your responses by shading the entire circle of your answer using a blue or black pen. Please do not write in the margins.**

**Shade circles like this:** ●

**Not like this:** ○ Or this: ⊗

## Budget

Having an anticipated revenue surplus of nearly \$2 billion, the Legislature is being asked to make additional investments for the future while being fiscally prudent. Rate each of the following on a 5-point scale, with "1 = should be funded" and "5 = should not be funded."

[illegible]

## Early learning and public schools

The Legislature is considering the recommendations of Washington Learns, a blue ribbon panel consisting of three advisory committees of educators, business leaders and legislators. I'm a member of the Early Learning Advisory Committee. Some of the panel's recommendations are included below. Rate each of the following on a 5-point scale with "1 = very important" and "5 = not important."

[illegible]



[illegible]

**SELECTED LEGISLATION THAT I'M SPONSORING:****PUBLIC SAFETY AND CONSUMER PROTECTION (CON'T.)**

	Voter 1					Voter 2				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Prohibiting the use of automatic dialing systems ("robo calls") before 9 a.m. and after 9 p.m. . . . .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Setting up a "do not mail" registry in Washington for in-state and out-of-state junk mail . . . . .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requiring background checks for those purchasing firearms at gun shows . . . . .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Equality**

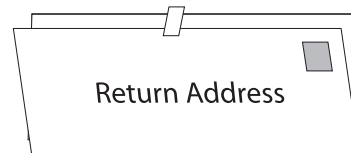
	Voter 1					Voter 2				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Establishing marriage equality for same-sex couples . . . . .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establishing domestic partnerships . . . . .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Growth management and environment**

	Voter 1					Voter 2				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Creating a task force to resolve future siting disputes when a public project in one county creates adverse environmental impacts in a neighboring county, such as the Brightwater Treatment Plant. . . . .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reducing climate change impacts by providing state tax credits for businesses reducing carbon dioxide emissions . . . . .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Mailing Instructions:**

When you have completed your questionnaire, please fold up this document so my return address mail panel is visible, tape the open edge of the questionnaire and affix a first class stamp.

**Please stay in touch!**

Your comments and concerns are always appreciated. Please take a moment to tell me what's on your mind.

Dear Jeanne,

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~ OPTIONAL ~

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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